

# Fire is EVERYONE'S fight



## Western Cape Fire Prevention Campaign: Fire is Everyone's Fight

The Western Cape Government, Disaster management, Fire and Rescue Services have initiated the roll out of an innovative fire prevention campaign called "Fire is Everyone's Fight" as the fire season approaches. One of the key messages illustrates the dangers of children playing with matches and lighters and the need for parental involvement in curbing the needless veld fires and injuries so often caused by this hazardous behaviour. In addition to this, fire safety educator toolkits are being distributed to every fire service throughout the province.

### The Fire is Everyone's Fight approach

The approach of the "Fire is Everyone's Fight" campaign emphasises collective action with cooperative efforts from various sectors such as the fire and rescue services, disaster management, environmental management agencies, health, education, social services, volunteer groups and NGO's. The approach further emphasises prevention - its starting point is that fires can be prevented and everyone has a role to play in ensuring that they are prevented.

The collaboration recognises the power of partnership as a critical means of marketing and delivering accurate and consistent fire safety messages into the community. This will be accomplished using a number of strategies, such as sharing information, joint development of targeted messaging and implementing multi-level behaviour modification interventions.



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The fire prevention campaign will use a wide range of resources to communicate the importance of taking action to protect ourselves and the people we love from the dangers of fire. By leveraging the fire prevention campaign, resources, supporting dissemination or advertising efforts, and encouraging private and government agencies to join the initiative, the fire safety community can present a consistent, repetitive message.

This content messaging will help diverse members of our society personalise and take action to reduce their own personal risk of fire. This includes support for public service announcement placements, educational outreach to community organisations, local media relations activities, and much more.



### **Objectives of the Fire Prevention campaign**

The theme is intended to be an easily understood and memorable phrase that encompasses a range of potential actions we can take to prevent fires or mitigate loss if they occur. The theme will be used on all prevention materials so that it becomes highly recognisable over time – and when people see or hear it, they immediately think of actions they can take to make their homes fire safe.

The specific objectives include:

- Reducing fire injury related deaths in informal settlements
- Reducing property loss from wild land / veld fire
- Reducing residential fire loss

Accomplishing these objectives will take a concerted effort by fire departments, government agencies, non-profit organisations, private companies, and communities across the province. This plan requires a wide range of approaches that will help partners and stakeholders understand that fire is everyone's fight—and the actions we can take to protect ourselves, the people we care about, and our homes.

### **Timeline for Implementation**

A multi-level staggered approach to reducing home fires and their consequences has been developed. The Fire and Rescue Services will act as a catalyst and convener, bringing together individuals and organisations who want to play a role and have the resources to do so. It is envisaged that the roll out of this campaign will be implemented over a 5 year period.

## Resources and Interventions

The fire prevention campaign will have a strong online presence that will enable organisations and the public to refer to and download key campaign information. Essential intervention resources and tools are being developed and packaged for distribution to the various role players.

The goal is to implement a mix of multi-level interventions that will help reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation. Every disaster is local and personal, and being prepared is both an individual and collective responsibility.

### The “Fire is Everyone’s Fight” Educators Toolkit



The *Fire is Everyone’s Fight* toolkit is a collection of resources that we hope will be of use to many of the organisations, agencies and individuals working to address the fire and burn prevention in the Western Cape, particularly those engaged at the community-level.

The focus of the toolkit is on community awareness using the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres as a delivery system. The emphasis is on preventing fire and burns rather than response or treatment, reflecting the WC Disaster Management and Fire & Rescue Services aim of promoting community-based risk reduction initiatives.

Most of the resources are targeted at people without specialist training. However, we advise all users of the toolkit to complete the *Fire is Everyone’s Fight* training workshop presented by the WC Disaster Management and Fire & Rescue Service.

As the fight to prevent fires and the associated injuries in the Western Cape continues, so more educational resources are being produced. We hope to continue updating and improving the toolkit and would appreciate your help in identifying additional resources to include. We would also like to hear about your experience of using the toolkit and any recommendations you may have as to how we might improve it. Remember – ‘Fire is Everyone’s Fight’.

